

2
**ARTICLE APPEARED
 ON PAGE A-3**

8 May 1987

Ex-Ambassador Shares Blame For Moscow Scandal, Webb Says

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Navy Secretary James H. Webb Jr. has accused Arthur A. Hartman, the former ambassador to the Soviet Union, of being at least partly to blame for the Marine security scandal by setting a permissive tone at the embassy in Moscow and allowing "extraordinary access to known KGB agents."

Webb's charge came as Defense Department officials reported that the military investigation of alleged espionage activities at U.S. embassies abroad has narrowed and is focused primarily on the four Marines arrested or charged in connection with the probe.

Webb, in an interview this week, criticized Hartman "for allowing extraordinary access to known KGB agents, dozens of them. His theory was it's better to have them in the tent rather than out of the tent. I can't agree with that. Look at the Soviet Embassy over here—they have one American working in it under their direct supervision."

Hartman, when told of Webb's charge, said yesterday that the Navy secretary "is talking through his hat. I particularly resent those remarks from somebody who has no knowledge of the situation."

Webb also charged that Hartman "had a complete arrogance toward counterintelligence," the practice of U.S. intelligence officers tracking Soviet counterparts. Webb said Hartman's philosophy was that counterintelligence was "provocative." Illustrating why he thought "this whole syndrome is very dangerous," Webb cited the decision-making for Marines at Beirut International Airport: They were told that if they dug in, it would provoke the Lebanese Shiites into firing at them.

Hartman, according to Webb, "had an indifference toward the environment which allowed the penetration by the KGB to occur," such as allowing fraternization between Marines and embassy employees and Soviet women.

Webb, a former Marine platoon leader who was sworn in as Navy



ARTHUR A. HARTMAN
 ... rejects Navy secretary's charge

secretary last month, said "one of the frustrations I have right now" is the lack of individual accountability across government.

"The Marine Corps is being focused on; the State Department isn't," he complained.

Even the presidential commission headed by former defense secretary Melvin R. Laird is emphasizing "systemic problems rather than individual problems," Webb said. "I think Hartman deserves all the criticism he has gotten."

Hartman, who served as ambassador to Moscow from 1981 until this year, said in a luncheon meeting with Washington Post editors and reporters on April 30 that the Marines assigned to the embassy had a reputation for rowdiness.

"They pulled [Soviet] flags down; they'd run through Red Square" in jogging clothes with offensive slogans on their shirts. "But it's one hell of a jump from that to treason," Hartman said. "We counted too heavily on the esprit of that group" to keep security breaches from occurring, he said.

Hartman said his critics in Congress and elsewhere have relied on a cable he never sent in accusing him of loose security practices. He acknowledged that he did send off a "colorful" cable opposing a recommendation to limit the number of Soviets in Washington "to well be-



JAMES H. WEBB JR.
 ... says KGB agents had access

low 100. My view was that was the equivalent of breaking relations—that they would close up the embassy" in Washington because they could not run it with so few people.

Webb stressed that Hartman's alleged permissiveness will not make his department go any easier on Marines charged with aiding Soviet espionage. "We are going to hold the individuals accountable," he said of the Marines. "I'm not trying to excuse their conduct." But, Webb continued, "the ambassador sets the tone" for conduct by embassy personnel.

Navy leaders and Marine Commandant P.X. Kelley are considering a number of steps to tighten Marine security, Webb said, with shortened tours only one of the changes in prospect. He declined to discuss other remedies on the grounds that all the facts about security breaches are not yet in hand.

A Defense Department official close to the investigation said yesterday that officials anticipate no more immediate arrests and are scaling back the probe's scope. A Marine official said the probe, which had expanded to more than a dozen embassies in Warsaw Pact nations and other sensitive regions, is now limited primarily to Moscow.

"We've reached the limits," said one Marine official. "There are not going to be a lot of surprises."